

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

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A DEVELOPING TREND

White members of a Washington Lutheran Church have set out on a unique doorbell-ringing campaign. Their object: To bring Negro families into the congregation.

Many white Protestant churches in the nation's capital have proclaimed "open door" racial policies within the last few years. But the Augustana Lutheran Church is the first to undertake a formal solicitation of Negro members.

The church is in the midst of one of Washington's "changing neighborhoods." The number of Negro residents has been increasing steadily for several years, while the white population has dwindled.

Like hundreds of other churches in the downtown areas of America's big cities, Augustana Lutheran was faced with two alternatives. It could follow its white parishioners and move to the suburbs. Or it could stand fast and become a "color blind" church.

Augustana Lutheran decided to join the small but growing group of racially-integrated churches.

Its pastor, the Rev. Clarence T. Nelson, explained why.

"We asked ourselves whose church this is. We realize that it is Christ's church, not ours. And we knew that he would never approve of abandoning a community in which there are thousands of families whom we can serve."

But Augustana learned, as other churches have, that a decision to welcome Negro families is merely the first step on the long road to racial integration.

"We opened the door, but virtually no one came in," said Nelson. "Our first Negro family was accepted into the congregation three years ago. By last Fall, we had a total membership of just two families."

It was then that Nelson and the lay leaders of the church decided to undertake "Operation One Mile" — a long-range campaign to bring into the congregation families, regardless of race, who lived within one mile of the church.

"We made a population survey and found 20,000 people living within a one-mile radius of our church," Nelson said. "And only 81 of them were members of Augustana Lutheran."

The church had a total membership of about 700 people at that time. Most of them came from white families which had long ago moved into the suburbs but were still "commuting" back to Augustana because of sentimental ties.

The first step in "Operation One Mile" was taken last October. Augustana canvassers called on one-third of the homes in a limited area near the church. Several Negro families accepted the invitation to join.

Augustana mailed out 6,000 illustrated pamphlets to families in the neighborhood. They stressed the theme that "Augustana welcomes everyone without exception." Pictures showed a Negro singer in the choir and Negro boys in the church-sponsored scout troop.

The latest phase of the campaign began Oct. 7. Teams of canvassers began going from home to home in the "one mile" neighborhood, extending personal invitations to every family.

Augustana's determined effort to become a racially-inclusive church has won a praise of high Lutheran officials.

The Rev. H. Conrad Hoyer, of Chicago, executive secretary of the Home Missions Division of the National Lutheran Council, said operation one mile is "glorious" demonstration of what a church can do when it is fully committed to the Christian precept that "all men count in the sight of the Lord."

Nelson said the Negro families who have joined the Augustana congregation have been "fully and warmly accepted" by the white members.

He estimated that "less than one per cent" of the original white congregation had left the church because of the integration program.

Nelson's advice to other churches seeking a way to lower racial barriers:

"Don't talk about it — do something. The actual experience of interracial worship quickly removes most peoples' fears and misgivings. Since we undertook Operation One Mile, there has been a noticeable deepening of the spiritual life of this church."

(Paterson, N. J. *Evening News*, November 19)

* * *

Two large Protestant congregations, separated by hundreds of miles and varying traditions, have lowered racial barriers to permit integration in their churches — one all white, the other all Negro.

In Minneapolis, the fashionable Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church opened its doors to members of a small Negro Methodist church which is to be torn down to make way for a redevelopment project.

And in the South, an all-Negro Baptist church in Louisville, Ky., has admitted 13 white persons to its congregation.

A delegation from the all-white, 4,000-member Methodist church in Minneapolis . . . told members of Border Negro Methodist Church, "We invite you with sincere warmth." They said the Negroes need not decide immediately whether to accept.

Dr. Stanley Coors, Minnesota Methodist bishop, said the invitation was a "proposal of Christian love and fellowship."

The integration move in Louisville was believed to be the first by a Baptist church in Kentucky since slavery days.

The 13 white persons joined the Zion Baptist Church in the past month and the pastor, the Rev. D. E. King, said they "seem to be enjoying themselves."

Representing three families, the 13 became the first white members of the 1,522-member Negro congregation. The church is in a Negro-white neighborhood.

The Rev. Willard P. Macy, former pastor of an all-white church in Louisville and one of the 13 who joined Zion, said his association with the Negro church has been a "wonderful experience."

The Rev. Mr. King, the pastor, said his Negro members "have taken this as a normal thing."

(Paterson, N. J. *Evening News*, December 3, 1956.)

CHURCHES MAKE STUDIES

National Level

Congregational Christian Churches will conduct a survey to determine how well racial integration practices in churches measure up to church pronouncements urging integration.

The survey . . . was presented . . . to a meeting in Cleveland of the denomination's Council for Social Action. A six-page questionnaire has been prepared for the projected study of 1,500 local churches. Interviews will be completed by the end of January.

(New York Times, November 1)

Local Level

Bishop Edgar A. Love, head of the Baltimore Area of The Methodist Church, is lending his support to an effort to solve some of the problems of race relations in the Baltimore and Washington Areas of the denomination.

Together with Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the Washington Area, Bishop Love has invited outstanding sociologists, educators, clergymen and laymen to a meeting to deal specifically with local interracial problems. . . .

Six study areas will be held on the following subjects: (1) Social Relations Involving Race in Church and Community; (2) Housing; (3) Employment; (4) Strategy on the Denominational Level; (5) Techniques for Social Action in the Local Church, and (6) Public Education.

Each study group will explore (1) the situation in this area; (2) what are our Christian concerns about these problems, and (3) what can be done about it?

The denomination's Board of Social and Economic Relations, the Rev. A. Dudley Ward, executive director, will co-sponsor the conference. . . .

(*Afro-American*, December 8)

The Christian Churches of Georgia (Disciples of Christ) approved a study report on action involving the convention's relationships with the Negro Christian Church Convention of Georgia.

Following acceptance of the report, a resolution was adopted calling for the continuation of the study between the two conventions and local churches. The convention requested that a report be made to the 1957 convention.

The resolution stated: "And to further clear lines of communication between Negro and white churches and to keep them from becoming blocked, the commission would call upon the people of our convention as committed individuals to make their Christian witness count in this matter. . . ."

(*Atlanta Constitution*, November 14)

Lutherans Decline to Endorse Court Decision

The United Lutheran Church . . . condemned enforced racial segregation but rejected an outright endorsement of the Supreme Court decision outlawing it in the public schools.

In a hectic closing session, the church's biennial convention voted down a proposed declaration that the court ruling was "in harmony with Christian convictions."

That portion was stricken from a statement urging church congregations to take the lead in demonstrating "the possibility of integration." . . .

Pleading for the convention to give specific backing to the Supreme Court's action, the Rev. Harold C. Letts of New York said: "If we leave out any indication that this decision was in accord with Christian principles, we will cast doubt on the whole process of integration going on in our Nation."

Many of the Nation's major Protestant churches have hailed the court ruling.

The convention . . . representing America's largest Lutheran group, voted 340 to 159 for an amendment by the Rev. Wynne C. Boliek of Greenville, S. C., eliminating the approving reference to the 1954 court decision.

"Many of our Christian brothers, especially in the South, have deep-seated feelings about the Supreme Court ruling," Mr. Boliek said.

"We will save some scars if we omit this particular section" . . .

After the ballot, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, church president, announced he wanted his own vote recorded in opposition to the deletion. Several delegates rose to request the same thing.

"I don't know why the church is always afraid to speak directly to issues confronting the people," said the Rev. Arnold Dahlquist of Cranford, N. J. . . .

But the Rev. Henry B. Luffberry of Philadelphia, argued the church's duty was to interpret "Christianity, not the Constitution." — that the latter job was up to the courts.

(*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 18)

Statement on Desegregation

The United Lutheran Church in America, recognizing its deep involvement in the moral crisis confronting the U.S.A. in the current controversy over desegregation occasioned by the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, affirms the Statement on Human Relations adopted by the Executive Board of the United Lutheran Church in America and the Board of Social Missions (April 1951), and calls upon all its congregations and people, exercising Christian patience and understanding, to work for the fullest realization of the objectives of that statement.

We believe that Christians have special responsibilities to keep open the channels of communication and understanding among the different groups in this controversy. Our congregations are encouraged to contribute to the solution of the problem by demonstrating in their own corporate lives the possibility of integration.

We furthermore state that due heed ought to be given the following principles by all and especially by those holding civil office, since they hold their power under God and are responsible to him for its exercise.

(1) The public school system so necessary to the maintenance of a democratic, free and just way of life, must be upheld and strengthened.

(2) All parties to the present controversy are in duty bound to follow and uphold due process of law, and to maintain public order.

(Adopted by the United Lutheran Church in America in Convention Assembled, October 17.)

ACTIVITIES IN LOCAL COUNCILS

Oklahoma City

In a precedent shattering move, Oklahoma City's Council of Churches . . . elected a Negro minister president of the 55-church federation.

He is Rev. Robert H. Alexander, pastor of Avery Chapel (African Methodist Episcopal) Church in the 200 block in N. Geary.

The former army chaplain and college president, accompanied by his wife, were swarmed by well-wishers following his election at a council meeting at St. Luke's Methodist church.

His election was unanimous. His was the only name recommended for the president's post. Some 150 delegates chorused an overwhelming voice vote when the Negro pastor's name was called.

Mr. Alexander is the first Negro to be elected president of the 20-year-old council. He has been a vice-president.

Of the 55 churches in the council, six are Negro. . . .

(*The Christian Recorder*, November 15, 1956.)

Tennessee

The Tennessee Council of Churches has unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the State's governor, board of education and state legislature to desegregate its public schools. It urged that the public school system be brought "into harmony with the letter and spirit" of the 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision and denounced as "contrary to our evangelical principle of separation of Church and State" the announced intention of "organized opposition to desegregation" to propose "legal control of church schools in order to attain its ends." . . .

(*Religious Newsweekly*, December 3)

DEVELOPMENTS IN CLINTON

The Anderson County (Tenn.) School Board asked the federal government Dec. 3 for help in enforcing racial integration at Clinton High School.

Otherwise, the board said, "it might become necessary to close" the school. . . .

In a letter to United States Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr., the board declared:

"The school board of Anderson County has conscientiously done all in its power to comply with the direction of the United States District Court in Knoxville, which ordered the integration last Jan. 4.

"This has been done, contrary to our convictions on the

matter and in the face of constant criticism and harassment from our fellow citizens." . . .

In its letter to Brownell, the board said:

"The Negro children in Clinton High School have asked us for protection in attending school. The board does not have legal authority to give this protection nor does it wish to assume it. . . .

"The Anderson School Board must know whether the Department of Justice intends to continue lack of enforcement of the federal court injunction. If so, it might become necessary to close the Clinton High School so long as we are under court order to abolish segregation.

"It is imperative that we hear from you within five days so that we may plan accordingly." . . .

(*Christian Science Monitor*, December 3)

A sidewalk assault on a Baptist clergyman and the invasion of a school building by several teenagers resulted . . . in the temporary closing of the Clinton (Tenn.) High School. . . .

The day's developments started at about 8:30 A. M. when Mr. Turner, along with Sidney Davis, a local lawyer, and Leo Burnett, an accountant for a hosiery mill, went up Foley Hill, the Negro settlement, and escorted six Negro pupils to the high school building.

The school bell rang and the white students entered. A few minutes later the three-man escort arrived with the Negro children and they entered the building without incident.

It was the first time the Negro children had come to school since Nov. 28 when they boycotted the classrooms because of "insults" and "mean incidents" they were subjected to by some of the white students. These included name-calling, jostling in corridors and pouring ink over a Negro girl's books. . . .

After Mr. Turner left the school building he was reportedly followed by several men. He said later he suspected a "trap" and that he went into the police station to request an escort. All of the patrolmen were on duty at the school grounds at the time.

Mr. Turner left the station, crossed the street near the telephone company building and was set upon by a group of seven men and two women. Witnesses said he was knocked down and beaten severely about the head before the police arrived. . . .

(*New York Times*, December 5)

The Federal Government used its contempt of court power . . . in a broad attack on racial segregationists who had interfered with integration at Clinton (Tenn.) High School.

Frank Quarles, United States Marshal for Eastern Tennessee, and six deputies left Knoxville . . . with sixteen writs of attachment to be served at Clinton a town of 3,712, fifteen miles away. The arrest orders were signed by Federal Judge Robert L. Taylor. . . . fifteen of the defendants had been arrested and brought to Knoxville. Six arrived in time to be arraigned before Judge Taylor. Nine were lodged in the Knox County jail pending court appearance. . . .

Meantime, the Anderson County School Board announced that it hoped to reopen Clinton High School Monday (December 10).

The contempt citations charged violation of the permanent injunction issued by Judge Taylor last August. It prohibited interference with the orderly process of school integration that had been started under an earlier court order by Judge Taylor.

The writs of attachment stated that the defendants had campaigned "to intimidate school officials; organized or joined a White Citizens Council aimed at preventing the effectiveness of integration."

This was believed to be the first instance in the South's racial integration problem that a court order had singled out the White Citizens Council as a vehicle for opposing school integration. There has been a widespread feeling among moderates in the South that such councils in many instances have taken extremist positions that deprive others of basic rights to unfettered speech, thought and association.

In Clinton the White Citizens Council has been outspoken in extremist views tinged with anti-Semitism. . . .

Clinton High School opened its fall session August 27, with about 800 white students and twelve Negro pupils. Over Labor Day week-end riots broke out. The National Guard restored order. . . .

(*The New York Times*, December 6, 1956.)

Municipal F E P

The fortieth and forty-first municipal FEP ordinances were enacted during the spring and summer. A Commission on Job Discrimination was created by the Des Moines City Council, effective April 13. The new commission consists of five members — two businessmen, two labor officials, one assistant county attorney (a Negro). It has authority to initiate complaints, conduct public hearings, issue orders and refer noncompliance to the city legal department. Des Moines also has a Commission on Human Rights, with broad educational functions.

An ordinance requiring fair employment practices on public works projects was passed unanimously by the St. Louis City Council on June 29. A seven-member commission will administer the ordinance, with the usual powers of education, persuasion and conciliation, and referral of unresolved cases to the City Counselor for prosecution.

(*Nairo Reporter*, October 1956).

ROBERT JOHNSON APPOINTED

The appointment of Dr. Robert B. Johnson, formerly associated with the Russell Sage Foundation and Cornell University, as Director of Research for the National Conference of Christians and Jews, was announced (on Oct. 20th) by Dr. Everett R. Clinchy, president of the organization. . . .

Dr. Johnson was associated from 1949-53 with the Cornell Intergroup Relations Study sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, and from 1953-56 with the Russell Sage Foundation. In this latter position he conducted an evaluative survey of the intergroup relations program of the American Friends Service Committee, studying the experience of this and other organizations in their attempts to alter patterns of job and housing discrimination, school segregation, and American Indian problems.

He has also held teaching and assistant teaching posts at the University of Chicago (1947), Fisk University (1949) and Cornell University (1950-53). He was a lecturer and consultant during 1953 with the Ford Foundation Intergroup Labor Education Committee, administered by the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University. He received his doctoral degree from that institution in 1955. . . .

(*News Release from National Conference of Christians and Jews*, October 21)

Scientists Make Joint Statement

Eighteen prominent social scientists from the staffs of universities and research institutions throughout the nation . . . issued a joint statement attacking as "scientifically unjustified" theories that the intellectual potential of Negroes is inferior to that of whites.

The signers, most of them members of the American Psychological Association, include: Prof. Otto Klineberg, Columbia University; Prof. Theodore Newcomb, University of Michigan; Dr. Gardner Murphy, Menninger Foundation; Prof. Nevitt Sanford, Vassar College; Prof. Robin Williams, Jr., Cornell University; Prof. David Krech, University of California; Prof. Jerome Bruner, Harvard University; Prof. Allison Davis, University of Chicago; Prof. Daniel Katz, University of Michigan; Prof. Anne Anastasi, Fordham University; Prof. Stuart Cook, New York University; Prof. Isidor Chein, New York University; Prof. Marie Jahoda, New York University; Prof. Kenneth Clark, College of the City of New York; Prof. Bingham Dai, Duke University School of Medicine; Prof. Irving Lorge, Teacher's College, Columbia University; Prof. Solomon Asch, Swarthmore College; and Dr. David Rapaport, Austin Riggs Foundation.

The joint statement supported its argument by citing positions taken in the past by leading scientific organizations which have "opposed the conclusion that race was a determiner of innate psychological characteristics."

After quoting excerpts from findings of these groups, the statement declared that "we know of no new research which would reverse these conclusions."

The statement criticized the position of "a few specialists" that Negro-white differences in intelligence test scores persist even when the two groups are "equated" for social and educational opportunities.

"To this we would point out that such 'equation' is exceedingly difficult to achieve, since the opportunities related to test performance are by no means easy to assess in quantitative terms."

The statement said that intelligence quotients of Southern Negro children improve markedly after a period of years in unsegregated schools available to them in New York or Philadelphia.

The joint statement also attacked the theory that differences in the intelligence quotients persist even when "noncultural" questions are used.

"We would deny the possibility of devising a 'noncultural' test in the light of our present understanding of the problem."

"No one can deny that at the present time the intellectual achievement of American Negro children, particularly those who are from segregated schools, is lower on the average than that of white children," the statement said, but it ascribed these differences in achievement to inferior educational opportunities "which may affect both the physical and mental development of the child."

Despite educational and environmental differences, the statement declared, there is "overlapping" between the two racial groups which means that many Negro children do better than the average white child "in spite of all of the handicaps to which the former have in the past been subjected."

"The conclusion is inescapable that any decision to use differences in the average achievement of the two racial groups as a basis for classifying in advance any individual child, Negro or white, is scientifically unjustified."

(News Release from Dept. of Psychology, Columbia University, October 16)

CLIMAX TO A BUS BOYCOTT

An Alabama law and a Montgomery city ordinance requiring segregation of the races on intrastate buses were struck down by the Supreme Court (November 13).

The court affirmed the ruling of a three-judge federal court that the challenged statutes "violate the due process and equal protection clauses of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States." This amendment provides that no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law nor deny to any citizen the equal protection of the laws.

In upholding the lower court judgment, the Supreme Court cited its 1954 decision outlawing racial segregation in the public schools and later rulings banning racial discrimination in public parks and golf courses.

Although only the Alabama laws were involved in the cases before the court, the ruling was interpreted as outlawing state or municipal enactments anywhere that require separation of the races on public vehicles. It was thought to have placed the headstone at the grave of Plessy vs. Ferguson.

This was a case decided in 1896. Then the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation on railroads was not unconstitutional if separate but equal facilities were provided. The "separate but equal" doctrine later was applied to segregation in other fields, such as education. The doctrine generally prevailed until the ruling in the school cases.

Since 1854, the doctrine has been discarded in every test that has been brought to the Supreme Court.

Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas have laws that could be affected by today's ruling.

Last term the Supreme Court had under advisement a case from Columbia, S. C., involving a similar issue. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals had invalidated South Carolina's bus segregation law. The ruling was interpreted as applying also to bus segregation in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland, also in the fourth judicial circuit.

In that case, however, the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal on technical grounds. It did not specifically affirm or reverse the circuit court's ruling.

The present order left little doubt that a new appeal in the Columbia case, if it again comes to the Supreme Court after procedural requirements are met in the lower courts, will suffer the fate that befell the Alabama statutes. . . .

(The Atlanta Constitution, November 14, 1956.)

Admission Practices Changed

Vanderbilt University at Nashville, Tenn. became the first privately owned university law school in the southeast to enroll Negroes when Edward M. Porter, 26 year old graduate of A. & I. University and 21 year old Frederick T. Work of Fisk University were admitted. The University Divinity School had a Negro graduate in 1954.

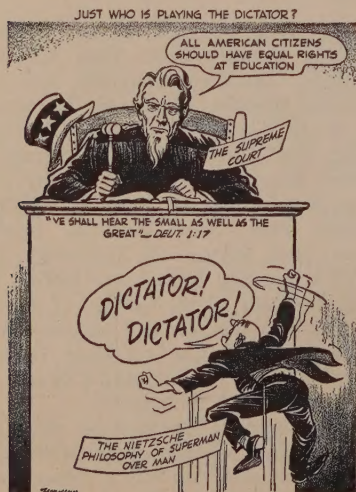
(Christian Index, November 15)

SUGGESTED READING

RACE ISSUES ON THE WORLD SCENE, Melvin Conant, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, Hawaii. 1956. \$4.00
A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE NEGRO IN AMERICA, Hughes & Meltzer, Crown Publishers, Inc. New York, New York. 1956. \$5.95

The matter in these pages is presented for the reader's information. Unless so stated, it is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or positions of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

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